

Jack: The Story of a Sniper

by TheDarkOne123321

Category: Halo

Language: English

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2005-02-02 05:05:41

Updated: 2005-02-02 05:05:41

Packaged: 2016-04-27 01:13:52

Rating: K

Chapters: 1

Words: 6,219

Publisher: [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)

Summary: This is the story of Jack, a sniper in the war against the Covenant. As his story unfolds, we discover his true origin and identity.

Jack: The Story of a Sniper

"I heard he's coming. Aren't you scared?" asked a Grunt Lieutenant to his Elite companion

"Fear is no longer a part of me, Unggoy. I have lived a noble life, and I shall fight the humans to all of my strength. If I die, it will be for the Great Journey."

"Whatever. I'm scared."

"Hmph."

The elite rose from the ruin wall he was leaning upon to continue his patrol, but was suddenly killed with a loud shot to the head. The grunt froze in terror, then turned and frantically ran for cover, but to no avail: the moment he ran, he met the same fate as his Elite comrade.

Sixty yards away, a sniper lies in the shadows of a thicket. He remains motionless, surveying the area for any signs of the Covenant. After what seems like an eternity, he radios in to a nearby Pelican, which hovers in and drops a Warthog, two ODSTs already at the guns.

"Just what the doctor ordered." he whispers to himself

After another moment or so, the sniper reloads his S2 AM Sniper Rifle and rises to his feet. As he walks out into the sunlight, his black Mark VI body armor gleams in the sunlight.

"I thought his armor was green?" one soldier whispers to the other as the sniper walks up to the driver side of the Warthog. The other

soldier only shrugs, for he is too concerned with the battle ahead.

The sniper throws his rifle behind the driver seat. The soldier in the passenger seat offers to swap with his battle rifle, but the sniper only stares at him. The two sit like that for a moment, until finally the sniper climbs in the driver seat, guns the engine, and races off.

Meanwhile, not too far away, the more familiar Spartan 117 is in a heated battle, well beneath the surface of an ancient lake. He is deep within a Forerunner temple, searching for the Prophet of Regret.

He was being pursued by a Covenant strike team, of which was suddenly redirected by a lone human vehicle, known by the humans as a "Warthog". Intercepted Covenant transmissions reported the vehicle was piloted by a human soldier much like the Demon in appearance, the only difference being a darker color of armor. Covenant commanders, fearing this to be another human diversion, authorized a green light on this warrior.

"Cortana, get me everything you can on this look-alike," said the Master Chief to his AI companion, "I want history, rank, identification, abilities, anything. If this guy is who I think he is, we'll need him."

"I'm on it."

The Warthog, driven by this mysterious sniper, has taken critical damage and is now aflame. It is headed for a large hill, about 200 yards high, and about 400 yards ahead. A ways in front of the Warthog, two Ghosts speed out of a cave and immediately open fire on our hero. The Warthog is equipped with a gauss cannon, and the gunner immediately opens fire upon, and destroys, the first ghost. The Warthog steers towards the burning wreck, and launches off of its left wing. The Warthog flies into the air, and with just enough tilt that the gunner can, and does, shoot and destroy the other Ghost. With both Ghosts demolished, their drivers burning, the Warthog speeds away from its newest threat, two Wraiths.

The Warthog begins to scale the hill, which has made it a far easier target for the Wraiths. Weaving in and out of the Wraith's plasma blasts, the driver radios in to the Pelican:

"Johnson, do you read me? We're ready for pick up. The 'Hog's not gonna make it. I'm sending you the coordinates."

The Warthog reaches the top of the hill and stops. The driver and passenger climb out, ready to fight to the death against these Covenant war machines. Just then, the Pelican lowers down from above, with Sergeant Major A.J. Johnson at the turret. The two ODSTs run towards the Pelican, the sniper backpedaling behind them.

"I thought you said the 'Hog wasn't gonna make it!" Johnson yelled above the Pelican's engines. Just then, the sniper threw his rifle into the Pelican, turned, and ran back towards the Warthog.

"What the hell is he doing! He'll be killed!" shouted one of the soldiers.

"I can't set here all day!" called the pilot from the cockpit.

"He knows what he's doing," Johnson yelled back, his body tense, his finger ready to hit the trigger.

The sniper ran to the driver side of the Warthog, reached in, and yanked off the emergency brake.

"What the hell? What is he doing?" one soldier whispered to another.

The sniper ran to the front of the Warthog, jumped up on the hood, and with both feet, shoved it back down the hill. The Warthog began to roll down, but soon lost control, turned, and began to roll down on its side. It collided with the first Wraith, and they both exploded in a display of orange and blue flames. Right then, the sniper leapt in the Pelican and yelled:

"Now!"

"You got it!"

Johnson immediately began hosing bullets into the smoke and flame. The second Wraith succeeded in dodging the explosion, but now was positioned in a stream of bullets, which, in a matter of seconds, reduced the Wraith to the same burning condition as its brother.

"One of these days, Jack, you're gonna get yourself killed, and take a few others with you, " Johnson yelled over the flames and bullets.

"I got us out of \_that\_, did I not?"

"You remind me of someone. You're both so damn reckless."

"Just get us out of here. You can tell me your stories when we get back home."

With the threat of the Wraiths now neutralized, the Pelican took to the skies. A bit after, the pilot called up Johnson.

"Uh, Sarge? I thought you might need to see this."

He pointed to an ancient structure in the middle of a lake, and in the skies above it, one of the largest Covenant fleets anyone has ever seen.

"\_Shit.\_ How fast can you get us down there and back?"

"What? Uh, about five minutes, why?"

"The Master Chief is down there, and I-"

He was stopped by a hand on his shoulder. Jack stood behind him, tall and resolute.

"He can get himself out of this one, and we both know it."

He nodded to the pilot.

"...Take us home, soldier," Johnson commands over his shoulder. He knows that Jack is right, and he should, too. Hell, wasn't he there to witness the Master Chief single-handedly destroying Halo and escaping alive? In his head, it makes sense, but he can't silence the concern for a friend.

Back aboard the In Amber Clad, high in the atmosphere above Delta Halo, the bridge has become a meeting place for Captain Miranda Keyes, Sergeant Major A.J. Johnson, and our recent hero, Jack.

"I'm glad the both of you made it back here in one piece. You both have fought bravely." She turned to Jack, who stood leaning against a wall, arms crossed.

"You have proven yourself well, Jack. With each mission, your skills, as well as recognition, increase greatly. I think it's time for people to know about you. They could use the encouragement."

"As long as it doesn't draw too much attention to me. I'm no hero, and I don't want to be treated like one."

"Well, people are going to be interested, there's no denying that, but I'll see what I can do about any unwanted attention. Now, although you did successfully distract the Covenant forces from the Master Chief, we do not know where he is."

"John can--"

"Who's John?" asked both Miranda and Johnson

"The Master Chief. That's his name." The two looked at each other for a moment until Miranda turned and asked:

"How do you know that?"

"...We go way back."

"Well, whether you think he's safe or not, we need you to go back and find out for sure. And Johnson, you're going with him.

"As long as it ain't no more flyboy crap. I think it's about time this kid learned what a real sniper looks like."

"I'll let you two settle that between yourselves. But one thing's for sure, you will all come back, no matter what it takes. We can't afford to lose any of you."

With that, the two saluted and left the bridge. They continued down a hallway in silence, passing armories, mess halls, and hangars. Nearing the end of the hallway, Sergeant Johnson stopped Jack.

"You know, now that you ain't all confidential and such, this opens up a lot more doors for you, 'least along the lines of weaponry."

"Explain."

"Well, take for example, your rifle. Ya ain't no rank-and-file

soldier, \_obviously\_, and you sure as hell ain't no rookie. You're a \_sniper\_, and don't you think you need a rifle that fits? Now, if you went down to Weaponry, I'm sure they'd be more than \_happy\_ to hit you up with something more suitable to your tastes."

"Thanks. And now that you've given your example, what is it you had on your mind. The rifle is not why you brought this up."

"Why don't you go grab something to eat, suit up, and meet me in Hanger B-01. I'll show you then."

Thirty minutes later, Jack walked into Hangar B-01, his new, fully customized sniper rifle slung over his shoulder. He met Sergeant Johnson loading some battle rifles into a Pelican.

"Ah, you're a lot quicker than I thought."

"What's your big surprise?"

"Son, the good lord works in mysterious ways, but not today. Look down there. That is 66 tons of straight-up, HE-spewin' dee-vine intavention. That...is a Scorpion."

"Impressive. I hate to be a killjoy here Sarge, but we can't fit a tank in that temple. "

"Yes, but we will need it soon, and now that you have the authorization, well, I thought now would be as good a time as any to \_introduce\_ thw two of you."

Jack shrugged. Just then, a siren rang above them.

"That's us. Let's be sure we all make it back in one piece, alright?"

"Never failed a mission, Johnson, and I'm not gonna start now."

-

The Pelican zoomed low over the moonlit waters. The Forerunner temple lay a burning ruin, its flames reflecting off the lake surface.

"Damn, that place took a beating."

"Pilot, take us down there, we're going inside."

The Pelican circled around the facility, but was unable to find a safe landing zone. It hovered low over a balcony, the same that the Master Chief had crossed a few hours earlier. Equipped with their sniper rifles and a few SMGs, Sergeant Johnson and Jack walked up the ramp, and forced open what remained of the door.

The temple was a mess. Huge holes in the floor showed water in lower floors. Suddenly, a few rooms ahead, something shifted and made a loud crash.

"What the hell-"

Jack raised his hand and readied his sniper rifle. Sergeant Johnson loaded an SMG and followed at a distance. The crash sounded again, followed by a minor explosion. Something was in there. Something was alive. Jack's pulse quickened. Was this John? Would he finally come face to face with him after all these years? Wait a minute, he thought. If this is him, that would mean he was in trouble, possibly near death. Jack started running. He reached the debris, paused, then signaled to Johnson. They both looked at each other, both nervous of what could lie beneath. Jack kneeled, set down his rifle, and heaved off the pieces of wall. Beneath it lied the charred, pitiful being that was the Prophet of Regret.

"...Unh...The..Demon...must be killed...the Great Journey...My sermon..."

"Great Journey? What happened here? Why was this done? ...Answer me!"

"I...I have sacrificed...m-myself, for the...the...fulfillment of the...Great Journey. The Sacred Icon...must be found...The Ark...will depart...on its...holy quest..."

"Sacred Icon? The Ark? Johnson, do you know anything about this?"

"I think. The Sacred Icon he's ramblin' about is the index: the key to start Halo. As for the Ark, I got no clue. Ask him."

"Where can I find this 'Ark'?"

"High...Charity...the sacred ring..."

"Johnson?"

"I was one of the last on the Pillar of Autumn. When my lifeboat was nearin' Halo, this big-ass Covenant structure appeared a ways off, and when I left, it was still there. That might be this 'High Charity' he's talkin' about."

"Well then, we know what we need to do, and we found John."

"Oh no. If this 'High Charity' is as important as this alien bastard says it is, there's no way the two of us can get in there, and we sure as hell ain't goin' back to Halo."

"Fine. \*\*We\*\* aren't. \*\*I\*\* am. Hh may be the legendary Master Chief, but contrary to popular belief, he isn't invincible, He's gonna need some help. As for you, you need to find the Index before the Covenant do, and stop them from activating Halo."

"How the hell do you plan on getting in?"

"Knock."

Three hours later, a single Pelican glided towards the Covenant fleet. Inside the Pelican was a small band of Marines led by Jack, his sniper rifle by his side. Almost immediately, the Pelican was met by a Covenant cruiser, and surrendered. A pair of banshees escorted the Pelican to a hangar on High Charity. The crew of the Pelican was met by a group of zealots, three of them had their energy swords

activated. One of the zealots, obviously in charge, stepped forward:

"Halt. This one is familiar, and should be to all of you. We have captured the Demon!" A roar erupted through the Elites. "Silence! He is still the Demon, and must always be looked at with caution. Everyone, be on your guard." He pointed to the Marines.

"Take them to the containment halls, and take the Demon up to the Council Chambers."

The Marines were shoved off through a door in the rear of the hangar to be imprisoned. Two zealots grabbed Jack's arms, and the one in charge lead them over to a gravity lift. They stepped inside and landed in what appeared to be a weapons locker of sorts. A glowing podium sat in the middle and on a rack in the middle, energy swords hung elegantly.

"Remove your helmet, Demon." the leader barked to Jack. The two guards who held his arms released him and shoved him forward. The leader dismissed them, and they left down the lift. As Jack raised his hands to his neck, an Honor Guard entered through the only door in the room.

"Ah, the Demon. I guess its time to see the face of the Covenant's greatest enemy."

The airlock on Jack's helmet hissed.

"I'm afraid you've got the wrong Demon," Jack said wryly, "But I would be more than happy to send you on your way to hell."

With that, Jack whipped off his helmet and threw it at the zealot, knocking him to the ground. The Honor Guard charged at Jack, his staff aimed for Jack's chest. Jack spun back, pivoting on his right foot, dodging the thrust. He grabbed the staff in his right hand, now spun 180 degrees so the staff is now behind his lower back, and is left elbow slammed into the Elite's face, knocking off its helmet. Jack then locked his right arm, and spun his body the remaining 180, pivoting on his left leg, and drove the spear into the Elite's stomach.

Jack ran over to the wall and grabbed a plasma pistol. The Elites were so excited when they captured him, that they didn't check him. He pulled out his sidearm, replaced his helmet, slung the Honor Guard's staff over his back, and left through the door. He ran down a few hallways, through a few doors, until he walked out onto a balcony. At the edge of the balcony, a gravity lift sat unactivated. In the background, the huge Forerunner ship sat ominously, its magnificent hull lit by the light from above. Jack activated the lift and rose a few meters, landing on the balcony above. He walked over to two large doors, leaned against them, and listened. He heard a soft murmuring, what sounded like a few Elites, and decided to enter. He activated the small holopanel to unlock the doors, and charged his plasma pistol. The doors slid open and he leapt through.

"\_Shit\_."

He made it to the Council Chamber after all. A group of Elite

Councilors, about fifteen, charged their energy swords, and ran towards Jack. He pulled out the staff on his back, set his stance, and prepared for one of the greatest battles of his life.

-

Sitting against a pedestal, the Elites dead around him, Jack caught his breath. He had soon found out that only the ornate head of the Honor Guard's staffs could resist the blows of the Elite's energy swords. He picked up a sword, its handle blade still activated from the battle before. Just then he heard a noise behind him, the sound of a teleportation brig, and the loading of a Needler. He grabbed the sword and leapt to fight once more. When he turned, however, he stood face-to-face with the Master Chief.

"John. Its been a while."

"So you're that imposter I've been hearing about. Show your face."

Jack dropped the sword and removed his helmet. The two stared at each other for a moment.

"Jack... I though you were dead."

"I could say the same about you."

"You two know each other?" asked a female voice coming from the Master Chief

"Let me guess: Cortana? We go way back."

"I see."

"How did you get that suit?" asked the Master Chief, nodding at Jack's Mark VI, "I though I was the only Spartan issued that armor."

"You were, at least, as far as the original Spartans are concerned. After we got word of your heroic destrucion of Halo, and what we believed as your death, Captain Keyes - that is, Miranda Keyes, the daughter of the captain on the \_Autumn\_, decided with your 'death' that the SPARTAN-II project was too big a success to let die that easily. However, she decided that it would be wiser to start with individual soldiers, and then work up to an army. I, inspired by your legendary actions, felt it necessary to continue where you left off. I volunteered myself as the first SPARTAN-III. However, when we heard of your survival, Miranda felt it would be wise to keep me a secret from the rest of the UNSC, as well as the public. You're a hero, John, and whether alive or dead, I wasn't going to take that title from you."

"Well, we can talk later. We've got more important things at hand. The Prophet of Truth has the index, and is ready to use it."

"The Prophet! That means Johnson is in trouble!"

"Last thing I heard, he's is being kept by a group of brutes on Delta Halo."



"They won't kill him, they're keeping him and Miranda alive. You see, we have the same physical appearance as the Forerunner 'Reclaimers', and thus we're the only ones who can activate the rings. However, we can still activate them against our will, which will happen if we don't get moving."

Jack picked up his helmet and placed it securely on his head, checked the sword, and a plasma shot whizzed over his shoulder.

"Kill the Demons!" a Brute commander yelled as a mass of Brutes and Brute Honor Guards flooded through the doors. Jack, his back still turned to the Brutes, nodded to the Master Chief, turned, and they ran into battle.

-

After the smoke cleared, the two met again near the doorway. They decided that if one Spartan can destroy an entire ring, two would be more than a formidable threat to the Covenant. They went back out to the balcony and down the lift, and fought their way through the halls to the detention blocks. Once there, they were to face an incredibly large force of Brute Honor Guards, as well as a few Grunts and Jackals. The battles were becoming more repetitive than challenging, and soon they had freed the Marines from their cells.

"John, we've got to hurry this up. The hanging gardens are ahead, and once we get through there, it'll be a straight shot to the ship."

"Right. There's gonna be a bit more resistance, now that they've heard about both of us."

The two fought their way through the gardens and the Mausoleum, but when they reached the Phantom landing platform, it was too late. Off to the side was the Prophet of Mercy, a Flood Infection form tearing viciously at his neck. The two walked up, and Jack kicked the Flood infection off.

"Your pal, where's he going?" asked the Master Chief.

"I know where he's going. To the ship, then to Earth. We don't need this guy." Jack pulled out his sword and slayed the Prophet. Just then, a flaming Pelican crashed into the platform. Flood Combat forms leapt out and immediately rushed the Mausoleum.

"So they found my Pelican," mumbled Jack. Then he remembered.

"My rifle!" Jack charged the sword and ran towards the Pelican, slicing through anything that dared challenge his path. When he reached the Pelican, he leapt inside, grabbed it, and joined the Master Chief.

"That's not going to get you far. The rounds pass through."

"That's why I grabbed these. Explosive rounds."

Jack loaded his rifle and opened fire. The two heroes fought their way back inside the Mausoleum and down a long, dark corridor. They eventually reached a large, circular hall, which had energy bridges around the rim. The two faced Brutes, Drones, and Jackals, not much

of a threat, but enough to concern them about their pace. They continued on through the dark, winding hallways, plowing through countless numbers of Covenant resistance. They finally reached the end of the hallway: a large room with an elevator in the center. They stepped on, and were taken up to the Inner Sanctum. They fought through the dark room, and entered through a large doorway on the other side. They were now another weapons locker, much like the one Jack was in when he escaped the Elites.

"I was in a room like this earlier. It had more weapons, but the idea was the same."

"These rooms are the private meeting halls for the Elites. Let's hurry, we're almost there."

They walked through a door on the right, down a short hall, which ended with a single gravity lift that headed to the conduit above.

"Well, John, this is it, the Final Run...You've always inspired me with your heroism."

"You've developed into quite a hero yourself, Jack."

"What are we doing! This isn't the end, there's no possible way. We're gonna make it."

With that, they stepped into the lift, and landed on a short balcony. At the end of the balcony, a glowing green beam lead off to the Forerunner ship.

"There it is."

There was a battle raging in front of them between Brutes and the Flood. The two heroes readied their weapons and walked forward towards the battle, slicing through the resistance. They broke into a slow jog, then a run, and finally, a sprint. The Master Chief activated an energy sword and began slashing through any and all enemy forces. Jack brandished his sniper rifle menacingly, pick off enemies so accurately, it was as if ice pounded through his veins.

They both arrived at the conduit, but as the Master Chief stepped forward, Jack turned behind them and knelt.

"Jack! Move!"

"Not this time, John. I got you where you need to be, now go. This is your fight. Besides, I still got a friend in trouble."

The Master Chief paused, nodded, then turned and walked towards the lift.

"Before you go, Cortana, do me a favor. I need a Phantom."

"Got it. There's a group of Brutes about to take off back on the landing platform. Follow the blue lights."

"Thanks."

The Master Chief stopped halfway up the ramp and turned.

"See you back on Earth, Jack."

"You go catch your flight."

With that, Jack ran off into the darkness. The Master Chief stood still for a moment, then reloaded his weapon and leapt into the conduit.

"How did you know him, anyway?" Cortana asked after a period of silence.

"He's my brother."

-

Jack's Phantom flew low over a cliff-side ocean. Off in the distance, The huge, spherical control room stood tall over the nearby canyons. Jack flew slowly towards a Forerunner installation, not far from the control room. A Scarab sat parked over a balcony where a group of Brutes held a small platoon of Marines captive. Among them was Sergeant Johnson.

Jack landed the Phantom and lowered the access ramp.

"It's about time the reinforcements showed up. I'm sick of watching these humans." One Brute whispered to the other, which nodded in agreement. As the smoke around the open hatchway expanded, a lone Brute stood in the doorway, unarmed.

"Identify yourself!" The Brute Commander yelled towards the phantom, shielding his eyes from the smoke.

The Demon Jack thought to himself as he kicked the dead Brute towards the Commander. Immediately, the Brutes opened fire aimlessly into the smoke, but were no match for Jack's rifle. Sergeant Johnson, who was among the group of Marines, took this opportunity to escape. He ran towards the Scarab and climbed aboard. It hummed to life and rose to its feet. By now Jack had walked out of the Phantom and was standing in front of the Scarab.

"A little late, huh Jack?"

"Would you prefer never?"

Jack leapt onto the back of the Scarab and was on his way in when he heard the engines of two Banshees. They swung around a bend in the canyon and opened fire at the Scarab.

"Hey Jack, a little help?"

"I'm on it."

Jack threw his rifle down into the Scarab and climbed atop the overhead platform. Johnson had figured out Jack's plan and moved to the controls of the top gun. Jack paused for a moment then ran full-sprint to the edge of the Scarab and leapt off. The pilot of the first Banshee pulled back to evade, but just then, Johnson fired a few rounds of the mounted gun at Jack, propelling him upward. Jack's

shields took most the beating, his armor the rest. He grabbed ahold of the side-mounted anti-gravity device and swung himself towards the cockpit. He opened up and pulled out the pilot, which revealed the main view screen. The pilot had figured out Jack's intent and had directed the Banshee towards the ocean below.

The Banshee was now travelling well over 50 miles per hour, about thirty feet above the surface. There was no way it could be saved. Jack pulled out a plasma grenade he had grabbed on the Phantom and stuck it to the Banshee. He leapt off, and the resultant explosion threw him towards the cliffside. He whipped out his combat knife and braced for the impact. His shields were already depleted from the explosion, so he felt the full result. Strong as Jack was, there was no denying; it hurt. Luckily, his knife drove into the cliff and held. Jack scaled the rock wall and surveyed the surroundings. The Scarab had already begun its way through the canyon, but wouldn't make it far without cover. He grabbed a wrecked Ghost and headed off after Johnson.

He fought his way through ground and air forces alike until he reached the Control Room. Crap thought Jack as he looked up to the entrance of the facility. He looked around briefly and soon conjured a plan. He scaled the leg of the Scarab and once on top, he leapt to a landing bay. There was one lone Banshee, and only a few Brutes. He snuck past, and leapt inside the Banshee. It roared to life and set off before the guards could reach it. Jack flew towards the Control Room door, but one look at the red lights across it told him it was locked.

"Jack, get back. Hey bastards! Knock Knock!"

The Scarab's main cannon charged up and fired at the door. One blast wasn't enough, however, and the doors still stood. Three Banshees flew around a bend in the canyon and immediately opened fire on the Scarab.

"Shit. Jack, I'll take care of these, you find another way inside. I'll catch up later." Jack flew a lap around the huge dome of the control room, looking for another way inside. He soon noticed a huge hole in the roof of the structure and flew towards it. Without a second thought, he descended and flew inside. He just barely fit, that is, once he scraped off the side-mounted anti-gravity pods. He was now in free-fall. He crashed atop a floating, three-layered structure in the middle of a large hall. He dismounted from the destroyed aircraft and looked around. There was no doubt in his mind: he was in the control room.

He looked around and found an open weapons locker. He pulled out a Covenant carbine and loaded it. Just then, he heard voices. He took cover behind a control panel, perhaps the control panel, and listened.

"Now take the Icon in your hands..." He immediately recognized the deep, animalistic voice of a Brute. He thought for a moment. The Icon...that is the Covenant name for the Index, that I know.

—

"Please, this Reclaimer is delicate!" This was one of the monitors; he could tell by the metallic ring in its voice. Reclaimer...If what I remember is correct, the only one's who were called that were

the Forerunners and us humans. This is where I step in...\_ Jack cocked the carbine and jumped out from behind the control panel. Up on a raised platform, the Brute commander, Tartarus, stood staring at Sergeant Johnson, Jack's sniper rifle directed for his skull. He held the Monitor in one of his hands, and in the other, the Index. Several Brutes stood behind him, their weapons at the ready.

"Don't shake the lightbulb. If you want to keep that brain of your inside your head, I'd tell those boys to chill." The Brute didn't listen. Instead, he threw the Monitor at Johnson, knocking him to the ground. He turned and grabbed the hand of a captured Marine. He forced the Index into the Marine's hand, and then into the activation slot. Jack immediately opened fire upon Tartarus, but to no effect: he had some sort of energy barrier that protected him.

Knocking his Brutes aside, Tartarus grabbed his hammer and leapt down to the floating platform. Jack and Tartarus stood but a few feet from each other, staring each other down.

"So, I finally stand face to face with the Demon. It's too late, the Great Journey has begun, you can't do anything to stop it."

"How about I worry about that once you're dead. That I know I can do." Tartarus let out a loud roar and slammed the hammer down over his head. He might be strong, but he isn't fast. By the time the hammer hit the ground, Jack had his carbine at the Brute's neck. "Go ahead, human. Shoot me." said the Brute in a challenging tone of voice. He swung out his arm and hit Jack with all his might. The resultant force knocked Jack about fifteen feet back into a wall. His head slammed back as he made contact, nearly knocking him unconscious.

"Th-That one really hurt..." A loud beeping went off in Jack's head, notifying that his shields were out. Jack's vision was blurry, and he strained to keep his head up. He could see Tartarus slowly approaching through a huge crack in his visor, and knew that he was in trouble. He felt feebly around for the carbine, but it was nowhere to be found. He let his arm fall limp as he awaited his execution. It was then that the Spartan inside him came to life.

\_This isn't my time. I'm not going out like this. Besides, I can't let John down. No Spartan fails his mission.\_ It was then that three sniper rounds fired upon Tartarus' shields, knocking them offline momentarily. "Jack, his shields are down! Kick his ass!" Jack leapt to his feet and threw his body at the Brute. He slammed his elbow into the Brute's chest, knocking him back, staggering. Jack took this opportunity to grab the Brute's hammer, but when he did, a surge of power ran through his body. He stood stunned for a moment, then fell to his knees.

"You're too weak, Demon, along with your entire race. You are all incompetent, and worthy of nothing but death." Jack knelt in the same place, ignoring the Brute's words. He flicked open a case on his leg and pulled out his combat knife. This was it; if he didn't kill it this time, he wouldn't make it. He slowly rose to his feet and faced the Brute.

"Look at you, you're falling apart. Give up, and I promise I'll kill you quickly." Jack raised his hands to his helmet and released the airlocks. He raised the helmet over his head and dropped it to the

floor. "That should make this easier," Jack said tauntingly. Tartarus growled and ran towards Jack, his hammer raised. Jack stood still until the last moment, and when the time came, he lunged forward. Tartarus stopped mid-step, his hammer still above his head. Jack stood lunged forward, his knife thrust deep within the shield reactor of the Brutes armor. Blood covered Jack's hands and dripped to the ground. He snapped off the hilt of the knife, lodging the blade within Tartarus' chest. He kicked it to the ground and stood staring for a moment.

"Jack! What the hell are you doing! Stop this thing!" Johnson yelled from the ledge above. He ran towards the purple-blue beam in the middle of the platform, his eyes focused on the Index. \_That should do it\_, he thought as he yanked the Index out of it's place. Suddenly, the room shook, and a blast shot through the beam towards the sky. Both Jack and Sergeant Johnson stood in disbelief, staring through the hole into the ceiling. They braced themselves as the beam made contact with a huge mass of energy that had formed in the middle of the ring. A huge explosion of light filled the room, but nothing else. After realizing what had happened, Johnson and Jack looked at each other and nodded. They did it. or so they thought.

A beacon materialized above the control panel, and a hologram of seven rings floated into the air. One of them was colored red, obviously Installation 04. A small marker pointed to the ring they were on, and soon it dissipated. The Monitor floated to Jack's side, humming as usual.

"What's it doing?" Jack asked, motioning towards the Monitor.

"Communicating at super-luminal speeds-"

"With what."

"Why, the other installations, of course."

"Let me guess: remote activation? I do my homework." Jack turned to face the Monitor. "Where can I find the switch?"

"Why, the Ark."

"Johnson, looks like I gotta go." Jack walked over to the Banshee and began to climb inside.

"Uh, Jack, where \_exactly\_ are you going." Johnson asked.

The Banshee roared to life. He hovered over the ground for a moment. Then pointed for the roof.

"You sure you don't need any back up?"

"Johnson, you know me better than that. See you back home." Johnson saluted, then turned to the Monitor. Jack's Banshee sped off through the hole in the roof and off towards the stars. It seemed his mission never ended. Then again, he didn't complain. \_John was right; I have become a sort of hero. Jack. The Demon. Whoever I am, the Covenant better watch out. \_

End  
file.